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Crisis y resistencia 2da parte 12

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Behind troop 'surge'

Pentagon sets course for wider war in Asia

By John Catalinotto

Washington has already begun to send more troops to occupy Afghanistan following President Barack Obama's Dec. 1 speech at West Point. In Afghanistan as in Iraq, the U.S. occupation will bring death to more Afghan civilians and more U.S. troops. It threatens to open a civil war in Pakistan, while the occupation of Iraq continues.

Like the war on Iraq, this war too has the support of U.S. bankers, corporate executives and generals. It grows out of the drive to secure energy sources and other raw materials and markets, to surround Russia and China with military bases and to avoid exposing the weaknesses of the Pentagon. The U.S. rulers depend on U.S. military power to overcome economic weaknesses that are sharpened during the capitalist downturn.

Ruling-class opinion was reflected in the editorial and op-ed opinions published in the New York Times and the Washington Post, the most influential of the U.S. corporate media. According to a report by Fairness and Accuracy in Media, the Times' op-eds were 5-to-1 pro-war and the Post's were 10-to-1 pro war. (fair.org, December)

The Republican Party establishment too has congratulated Obama for opting for a "surge." The more rabidly chauvinistic media like Fox and the more militarist politicians like Dick Cheney have been aggressively pushing for a wider war. They have chided Obama for every sign of hesitation.

Obama himself drew attention to the problem of paying for the war when he invited his budget chief, Peter Orszag, to attend the war cabinet meeting before the Dec. 1 speech. During this severe capitalist economic crisis the increased costs of the war will come directly from funds that could be used to provide jobs and services for unemployed workers at home. This is one more reason for organizers to unite those opposing the war with those fighting for jobs, workers' rights and economic justice.

The war's costs—with another $50 billion for the "surge" next year—will narrow support for the administration by limiting the funds it has available to provide jobs and social services for the workers and oppressed peoples who were Obama's strongest supporters.

Now the Democrats' war

The new administration has taken over responsibility for the Afghan war, which the George W. Bush administration launched in October 2001 in the wake of 9/11 before turning the Pentagon's attention to oil-rich Iraq. The Bush gang's unilateral policy failed in Iraq and Afghanistan and weakened U.S. imperialism in the rest of the world.

Now the ruling class is looking to a government that combines Democrats with "moderate" Republicans like Defense Secretary Robert Gates to guide the next phase of Washington's attempt to reconquer the former colonial world. The media have begun to call the Afghanistan occupation "Obama's war."

This war's execution, however, is closely following the plans laid out last summer by General Stanley McChrystal. The Pentagon is in charge.

The president, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Gates are left with the task of selling this criminal war to the U.S. population and to the world. This task requires publicly spreading lies about the character of the Afghan resistance, twisting the arms of NATO allies to get them to drag more of their own troops into the war zone, and twisting heads in Pakistan to get the regime there to use its army against the population of the regions bordering Afghanistan.

The two secretaries' first public appearances after Dec. 1 already deflated the one statement in Obama's speech that differed with the Pentagon's proposals: that the troop commitment was not open-ended and that U.S. troops would withdraw from Afghanistan starting in July 2011.

Gates quickly put that myth to rest. "We will have 100,000 forces, troops there," he said on NBC's Meet the Press, "and they are not leaving in July of 2011. Some handful or some small number, or whatever the conditions permit, we'll begin to withdraw at that time."

In other words, it will be no easier for the White House to order a withdrawal in 2011 than it was to refuse the escalation in 2009, no matter how many Afghans are slaughtered, how many U.S. troops are killed or wounded, how corrupt the Afghan puppet regime remains or how much the war bankrupts the U.S. Treasury.

We shouldn't forget that U.S. troops still occupy bases in Iraq and Kosovo after a decade and Korea after 56 years, after wars led by both Democratic and Republican administrations.

Twisting arms in Brussels and Islamabad

Clinton was in Brussels Dec. 4 explaining Obama's plans while asking for 10,000 additional troops from other NATO countries. It is this aspect of U.S. war policy where the new Democratic and the last Republican administration differ most: the new administration tries to include Washington's imperialist allies in the military adventures in return for a share of the plunder.

Clinton said she was heartened by NATO's promises of 7,000 troops. NATO held back from publishing a list of which countries promised what number of troops. A full list might have exposed weaknesses.

Washington's junior imperialist partner in London has promised more troops;

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WW PHOTO: JOHN CATALINOTTO

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WW PHOTO: LIZ GREEN

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Moratorium NOW!

Fight against foreclosures, evictions

The following excerpts are from a talk given by Sandra Hines, an organizer with Michigan's Moratorium NOW! Coalition, at the WWP National Conference, Nov. 14. View this entire talk at www.workers.tv.

WW PHOTO: G. DUNKEL

Sandra Hines

On Oct. 6, over 50,000 people lined up outside the Cobo Conference Center in downtown Detroit in an attempt to pick up 5,000 available applications that would have provided only $3,500 in assistance for mortgage and utility payments.

We know that the stimulus money is not reaching the people. We need jobs now! We want President Obama to bail out the people, not the banks. The homeless population is steadily growing. The number of hungry people is at an all-time high. Health care appears to be out of reach for many people. Shelters have unending waiting lists and our quality of life is at a standstill.

The state of our economy has affected every working person. Detroit is the hardest hit city in the United States with the highest unemployment rate. The Moratorium NOW! Coalition to Stop Foreclosures, Evictions and Utility Shutoffs has declared Detroit and the state of Michigan as being in a state of emergency. Detroit is a "Katrina" without water.

Michigan's governor, Jennifer Granholm, has the legal and constitutional right and duty to declare an economic state of emergency in Michigan; however, she has refused to do so. This has caused more hardship to the people as joblessness continues to rise and foreclosures and evictions have exploded out of control.

Yet the people in Detroit are fearless and courageous and we have not given up. The Moratorium NOW! Coalition has launched a battle against one of the most powerful bosses in Michigan, DTE Energy, which supplies all the power to the Detroit metropolitan area.

We fought alongside 65 tenants who were given 24 hours by the landlords to vacate the Wellington Commons, a 200-unit apartment building in Detroit. As a result of the efforts of Moratorium NOW! and the tenants, they were granted another 60 days to relocate and keep their power on. The tenants were allowed to move into other buildings supervised by the management company that took control of the bankrupt hedge fund's property. This firm is based in New York and owns many other slum dwellings in the city of Detroit.

We also worked with the tenants at the Highland Towers, located in Highland Park, a city surrounded by Detroit. At the Highland Towers over 200 tenants were facing an illegal lockout after their power was shut off by DTE Energy.

We protested in front of DTE Energy headquarters downtown. We organized a sit-in at the building to demand that the power company restore services to the building. After the public campaign—which resulted in a court action—the power was restored and DTE was forced to pay the relocation costs for all the tenants.

Moratorium NOW! has continued to fight and help families stay in their lifetime homes. Our latest victory was on behalf of Ms. Belva Davis, a young woman who lives in the historic East English Village. Along with Moratorium NOW!, she gained the support of her neighbors and fought back until she reclaimed her home from Wachovia Bank, which is now owned by Wells Fargo.

Moratorium NOW!, in conjunction with the Bail Out the People Movement and other trade unionists and community organizations, helped to organize the Tent City and National Jobs March in Pittsburgh in September. This kicked off the protests surrounding the G-20 Summit.

The Pittsburgh Tent City followed the People's Summit/Tent City in Detroit held in June 2009. Both events generated hundreds of people to testify and protest against the global economic crisis.

Moratorium NOW! supports the youth organization Fight Imperialism, Stand Together (FIST), whose leader Josh is working to bring more young adults into the struggle. The group is an integral part of the Moratorium NOW! Coalition. FIST has led demonstrations, distributed literature, staffed the office and offered young people a revolutionary voice to be heard in Detroit.

Just recently, we organized a demonstration in protest of the ongoing occupations of Iraq, Afghanistan, Palestine and U.S. militarism around the world. Also on Nov. 5 we held a demonstration in front of the federal building to protest the assassination of Muslim leader Imam Luqman Ameen Abdullah, who was shot down and killed by the FBI on October 28 in Dearborn.

The demonstration brought together hundreds of Muslims and people of other faiths. The demonstration led to the reunification of African-American, Arab, South Asian and other Muslims. Imam Luqman worked with his followers to house and feed the poor and homeless.

The FBI story on his death has changed daily. Now they admit that there are no terrorism charges involved in the case. We know from history that the FBI is a racist and terrorist organization. We feel that the FBI is trying to cover up the death of Imam Luqman Ameen Abdullah.

We want to emphasize our continuing struggle to 1) organize tenant councils across Detroit, 2) demand a real jobs program that would provide employment to all, 3) demand quality education for all youth and to oppose the privatization of our schools, 4) uphold the right to reproductive freedom for all women regardless of social class, 5) demand fresh water, food and utility services and 6) Bring the troops home now! Money for cities, not for war! Moratorium NOW! Justice NOW! □

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Conference-goers gather for group photo.

International conference highlights freedom for Cuban Five

TIJUANA, Mexico—The Sixth Cuba/Venezuela/Mexico/North America Labor Conference met here the weekend of Dec. 4-6. The gathering was comprised of labor organizers, political activists, youth and students from all across Latin America, the U.S., Canada, the Philippines and other countries. Participants exchanged information, experience, political analysis and proposals for increasing the global influence of the international working class, including immigrant workers, in this period of severe worldwide economic and political crisis.

The struggle to free the heroic Cuban Five, defenders of Cuba's independence against continued acts of terrorism originating in the U.S., was a prominent theme throughout the three-day conference. The Five are presently unjustly incarcerated in U.S. federal prisons. The Friday evening meeting was devoted specifically to this issue. An in-depth report on the conference will appear in an upcoming issue of Workers World.

—Report and photo by Bob McCubbin

Natural gas drilling and hydraulic fracturing

'Fracking' causes environmental, human disaster

By Betsey Piette

Imagine finding methane and metals in your drinking water or having your water well explode or catch on fire. Imagine getting thrown out of bed one morning as your entire house is lifted off the ground from an explosion due to methane gas build-up. These nightmares are a reality for a growing number of families whose homes are located near natural gas drilling sites in New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio and other states across the U.S.

These explosions, along with massive fish kills, and chemical and even radioactive contamination of drinking water, are linked to a practice known as hydraulic fracturing or "fracking," used in nine out of 10 natural gas wells in the U.S.

Pioneered by Halliburton, the process involves injecting millions of gallons of water, sand and chemicals at high pressure down and across horizontally drilled wells as far as 10,000 feet below the surface. The pressure causes the rocks to crack and release natural gas. The fissures are held apart by the sand particles allowing natural gas from the shale to flow up the well. Halliburton refuses to divulge the contents of the chemical cocktail used in the process.

Since 2004, much of this practice has been concentrated in the Marcellus Shale, a geological formation that spreads from midstate New York across more than half of Pennsylvania and into Ohio and West Virginia. It reaches cities from Cleveland, Buffalo N.Y., and Pittsburgh in the western region almost to New York City and Philadelphia in the east.

The major companies involved in drilling in the Marcellus Shale area include Oklahoma City-based Chesapeake Energy, with rights to 1.45 million acres; Texas-based Range Resources, with 1.4 million acres; and Cabot Oil & Gas, also headquartered in Texas, with 1.2 million acres. Several billion-dollar companies, including Norwegian colossus StatoilHydro Asa, Texas-based Anadarko Petroleum and EOG Resources, are also feeding at the Marcellus Shale trough.

The natural gas content of the Marcellus Shale is estimated to range from 168 trillion to 516 trillion cubic feet. From 2000 to 2008 the number of active oil and gas wells in New York nearly doubled, from 6,845 to 13,687. In Pennsylvania 4,000 wells have been drilled since 2008, and are anticipated to produce 19 million gallons of wastewater a day by 2011. While the industry claims that thousands of new jobs are being created, so far much of the field work is being done by crews from Texas and Oklahoma who have expertise in shale gas.

Pennsylvania Gov. Ed Rendell had pushed for a tax on gas extracted from the wells, but dropped the plan despite record budget deficits that kept the state from paying vendors for more than 100 days this summer. The natural gas industry spent over $1 million lobbying the state Legislature to oppose the tax. Instead of the tax, Rendell has proposed tripling the number of leases for drillers in state-owned forests.

Targeting poor communities

Much of this area is in the impoverished northern Appalachia region, dotted by isolated small towns and farms that are no longer productive, and are communities with high rates of unemployment. The poverty and relative isolation of the region have made residents prime targets of corporate salespeople, who have pushed them into leasing land for oil wells.

In Dimrock, Pa., one out of seven residents was out of work and people were facing foreclosure of their homes. When Cabot offered $25 an acre for the right to drill for five years, plus royalties when gas started flowing, it sounded like a good deal to people who owned vacant fields but little else.

Cabot, which earned close to a billion dollars in revenue in 2008, drilled 20 wells in the area and is producing $58 million worth of gas annually. The subsequent water contamination has forced many low-income Dimrock residents to turn to expensive bottled water.

Problems stemming from fracking are surfacing in communities throughout the Marcellus Shale region. In Dimrock, considered "ground zero" for drilling, several drinking-water wells have exploded.

"Nine were found to contain so much methane gas that one homeowner was told to open a window if he planned to take a bath. Dishes showed metallic streaks that couldn't be washed off, and tests also showed high amounts of aluminum, lead and iron, prompting fears that drilling fluids might be contaminating the water along with the gas." (ProPublica, April 26).

In September, Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection officials charged Cabot with five violations after nearly 8,000 gallons of hydraulic fracturing fluids spilled in two separate incidents near Dimrock. It took a third spill for Cabot to voluntarily halt the fracking. According to Halliburton the substance spilled was a lubricating gel that poses "a substantial threat to human health" and was a "potential carcinogen" that has caused skin cancer in animals.

Residents near the town of Roaring Branch, Pa., reported rust-colored water flowing from a spring and two small creeks bubbling with methane gas. The incidents were among more than 50 similar cases related to gas drilling in the state. In several instances houses exploded as a result of gas leaks and in one case three people were killed.

Workers at U.S. Steel and Allegheny Energy near McKeesport found that water used to power their plant contained so much salty sediment it was corroding their machinery. An estimated 10,000 fish died on a 33-mile stretch of Dunkard Creek in this area.

A giant 'science experiment'

There is also a growing concern that the huge amount of water needed for drilling as well as the enormous volume of waste water created in the fracking process could eventually put water supplies in jeopardy, including the supply to New York City that, in fact, serves half the state's population.

Along with the rapid expansion in the Marcellus Shale region has come growing environmental concerns. Many of the practices used in the extraction are still experimental. "In this gas rush, New York is fast becoming a geological science experiment that many experts fear will have profound, dire environmental and health consequences. The drilling companies use a witch's brew of water, pressure and chemicals to force the gas from the shale. It is the secrecy of what is in that brew that has New Yorkers worried," stated Allison Sickle. (DCBureau, Nov. 30)

Oil-based chemicals have been used in the gas drilling process, but are known to be harmful to the environment. Toxic mud and fracturing fluids, along with waste water that resurfaces, can contaminate soil and surface water. Spills have already resulted from the transport of chemically-laden fluids and wastewater to and from drilling sites.

The New York Department of Environmental Conservation has detected high levels of radium-226, a radioactive element, in 13 samples of wastewater from Marcellus Shale drilling, according to ProPublica. The state now faces a wastewater disposal problem.

Chemicals coming out with wastewater from wells in Pennsylvania and West Virginia were found to include 4-nitroquinoline N-oxide, used to induce tumors in laboratory animals, and benzene, a known carcinogen.

Sickle notes, "Environmentalists fear increased natural gas production has a huge risk of ruining some of the most pristine watershed, park, farm and recreational land in the United States." The region involves 7,500 lakes and ponds and 50,000 miles of rivers and streams.

Fracking also occurs in parts of the Midwest and southwestern U.S. There are no regulations for hydraulic fracturing in 21 of the 31 states where the practice has been in effect for several years. Fracking was exempted from the Safe Drinking Water Act and the Clean Water Act passed by Congress as part of the Energy Policy Act in 2005.

Dec. 3 marked the 25th anniversary of the widespread and continued contamination resulting from the Union Carbide chemical leak in Bhopal, India, that claimed tens of thousands of lives. Without any serious regulation of hydraulic fracturing practices, is the U.S. facing a disaster of that magnitude?

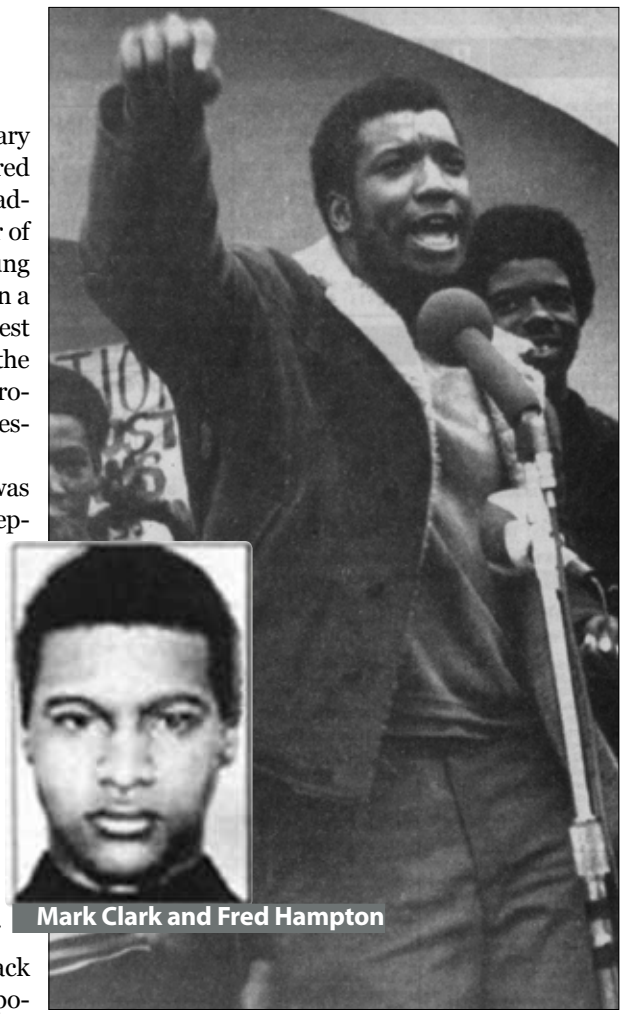
Next: Activists say "No fracking way!"—Interview with Ithaca-based Green Guerrillas

Remembering Fred Hampton and Mark Clark

By Abayomi Azikiwe
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

Dec. 4 marked the 40th anniversary of the targeted assassinations of Fred Hampton and Mark Clark, two leading members of the Illinois Chapter of the Black Panther Party. These young revolutionary activists were killed in a Panther residence on Chicago's West Side in a neighborhood where the organization ran free breakfast programs and was in the process of establishing a free medical clinic.

Hampton was 21 when he was killed in his apartment while sleeping. Clark was 22 and was visiting Chicago from Peoria, Ill. Despite their youth, both Hampton and Clark had been organizers for several years. Hampton had worked with the NAACP Youth Council in Maywood, a Chicago suburb. Clark had worked with the NAACP in Peoria, which sought to educate and mobilize young people to fight segregation and racism.



Mark Clark and Fred Hampton

In 1969 the Federal Bureau of Investigation had identified the Black Panther Party for liquidation. Corporate media accounts of the BPP falsely portrayed the organization as violent and bent on inflicting harm on whites in general and the police in particular.

Hundreds of Panther leaders and cadres were arrested on trumped-up charges. Several were killed, including Alprentice "Bunchy" Carter and John Huggins. Other Panthers were driven underground and into exile, such as Eldridge and Kathleen Cleaver, who eventually took refuge in Algeria where they established the International Section of the BPP in 1969.

Origins of the Black Panther Party

The Black Panther Party grew out of the civil rights and Black Power struggles in the United States. In Alabama in 1965-66, the Lowndes County Freedom Organization utilized the black panther symbol to build an independent political organization in the state. By early 1966 other areas of Alabama had set up Panther organizations, and these efforts entailed the armed self-defense of African Americans against the racist attacks by the Ku Klux Klan and law-enforcement agents.

Stokely Carmichael (aka Kwame Turé), Willie Ricks (aka Mukasa Dada) and H. Rap Brown (aka Imam Jamil Abdullah Al-Amin) were leading organizers of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, which built the initial Black Panther organizations in Alabama. After the cry for "Black Power" gained national attention in the summer of 1966, several groups around the country began to form Black Panther organizations.

In California there were at least three different Black Panther organizations in both the southern and northern areas of the state. In October 1966 Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale, along with a few other young men such Bobby Hutton and Elbert Howard, formed the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense. Eventually this grouping became known as the Black Panther Party, and went on to open approximately 40 chapters throughout the U.S. and the International Section in Algiers.

In 1969 Fred Hampton had gained a national reputation for his organizing efforts in Chicago. He had joined the Black Panther Party in 1968 and quickly rose through the ranks to become Deputy Chairman of the Illinois chapter. He soon became a target for neutralization by the police and the FBI.

In early 1969 Hampton was falsely accused of robbing an ice cream truck. He was convicted and sent to state prison in Menard, Ill. He was released in August 1969 on appeal and continued his organizing work.

Hampton was instrumental in forming alliances between the Panthers and youth organizations such as the Disciples on Chicago's West Side. He later formed coalitions with the Young Lords, a youth group of Puerto Ricans who sought to build a revolutionary movement in Chicago and New York.

Hampton also worked with organizations from the Chicano community as well as whites from Appalachia, who formed a group called the Young Patriots. He worked with other leftists from the student movement, including members of Students for a Democratic Society.

Police, FBI target Panthers

During the fall of 1969 the Chicago 8 conspiracy trial began. Bobby Seale, the BPP chairman, was a co-defendant, along with seven members of anti-war, peace and student groups who were charged with plotting to disrupt the 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago. Seale was attacked by presiding Judge Julius Hoffman, who denied him the right to represent himself in the absence of attorney Charles Gerry. Hoffman ordered Seale bound and gagged. Seale was eventually removed from the trial and thrown into prison.

The Black Panther Party in Chicago was attacked on numerous occasions by the police during 1969. In one armed confrontation at the BPP office, five police officers were wounded along with three Panthers. On Nov. 13, 1969, former Panther Spurgeon "Jake" Winters was killed in a shootout where three police officers were killed. Hampton eulogized Winters as a fallen comrade.

After the deaths of the three Chicago police officers in November, FBI and police efforts intensified against the Illinois chapter of the BPP. FBI Special Agent in Charge Marlin Johnson recruited William O'Neal, a petty thief who had been arrested for taking a stolen car across state lines, to infiltrate the Panthers.

O'Neal engaged in agent-provocateur behavior inside the organization. He was reported to have built an electric chair to torture informants, when he himself was an FBI snitch. O'Neal drafted a floor plan of the Monroe Street apartment where Hampton and other Panthers lived and turned it over to the FBI.

The FBI did not carry out the deadly raid, but utilized Illinois State Attorney Edward V. Hanrahan, who had political aspirations to become governor of the state. Hanrahan recruited 14 Chicago police officers to conduct the raid. Prior to the raid, O'Neal drugged the apartment occupants so they would be unable to defend the residence against the police, as the Panthers had done at their offices on the West Side.

When the police conducted the raid at 4:45 a.m., they killed both Fred Hampton and Mark Clark. Four other Panthers—Ronald "Doc" Satchell, Verlina Brewer, Brenda "China Doll" Harris and Blair Anderson—and one supporter were wounded in the raid.

Louis Truelock and Harold Bell were brutally beaten in jail after the raid. Deborah Johnson, later known as Akua Njeri, was eight months' pregnant with Fred Hampton's child. The seven survivors of the raid were falsely charged with numerous felonies, including attempted murder.

Even though the charges against the survivors were eventually dropped, the coroner's inquest reached a verdict of "justifiable homicide." A federal inquiry said the raid was botched and resulted unnecessarily in the deaths of two people. No criminal charges, however, were filed against the police.

A civil suit filed by the survivors, which went on for over a decade, led to an out-of-court settlement. No one was ever found criminally liable by the courts for the murder of Hampton and Clark or for the wounding and false prosecution of the others in the apartment on Dec. 4, 1969. □

A visit with political prisoner Jalil Muntaqim

By Kit Aastrup
Auburn, N.Y.

Visiting a prisoner is not easy, for either a family member or a political activist. Often the only way is to take a special bus round trip to one of the many prisons located, like Auburn, in a rural setting. A prison bus from New York City to Auburn takes six hours each way and leaves in the middle of the night from Lexington Avenue and 125th Street for a 9 a.m. visit.

After corresponding with Jalil Muntaqim for more than four years, it was exciting to finally meet him this fall. Happily, he turned out to be exactly the same person as he is in his letters.

Muntaqim, aka Anthony Bottom, is one of the longest-held political prisoners. He has been incarcerated for 38 years. He was only 19 years old and a member of the Black Panther Party when he was sent to prison in 1971 on conspiracy charges following the killing of a police officer, allegedly in retaliation for the murder of Black political prisoner George Jackson.

Muntaqim was targeted by COINTELPRO, an unconstitutional and clandestine FBI operation that was set up to destroy political organizations, especially those from the oppressed communities. In 1975 Muntaqim was wrongly convicted of killing two police officers in New York City, although there was no physical evidence against him and two juries failed to convict him before the State found one that did.

Muntaqim, who received a sentence of 25 years to life, has always maintained his innocence. While in prison he has managed to obtain two bachelor degrees, one in sociology and one in psychology. He was refused permission to pursue a master's degree in public health.

Throughout his many years in prison he has taught a poetry class, participated in a sit-down strike, and was one of the co-founders of the Jericho Amnesty Movement, an organization for political prisoners in the United States, initiated by the Jericho March in 1998.

The San Francisco 8

In 2007 Muntaqim was charged in a cold case from 1971 known as the San Francisco 8 case, and he was transferred from Auburn Correctional Facility in New York to San Francisco County Jail. This case was originally dropped in 1975 because it was based on confessions extracted by torture.

At the end of July, two of the SF8, Herman Bell and Muntaqim, were sentenced to probation and time served, after Bell agreed to plead to voluntary manslaughter and Muntaqim reluctantly pleaded no contest to conspiracy to voluntary manslaughter. All charges were then dropped against Richard Brown, Hank Jones, Harold Taylor and Ray Boudreaux, with the prosecution admitting it had "insufficient evidence."

Jalil Muntaqim

Charges were dropped against Richard O'Neal last year. Only Francisco Torres still faces charges; he maintains his innocence.

Now Muntaqim is back in Auburn. He had been denied parole four times before, the last time in 2006. He failed to see the parole board in 2008 due to his transfer to the state of California in the SF8 case. He was denied parole for the fifth time in November and won't be up for parole again until June 2010.

Punishment not limited to incarceration

How can a prisoner keep sane with nonstop daily humiliations? The penalty of prison is not limited to incarceration. It takes away your whole life. It penalizes your family, your spouse or partner, and your children. The routine is aimed to break down your self-esteem and your self-confidence. Solitary confinement can break nearly anyone.

When first incarcerated, Muntaqim was a 19-year-old with a pregnant girlfriend. He now has a 37-year-old daughter, grandchildren and even a great-grandchild. He has educated himself. He wants a life—with a job, with family and friends—a modest ambition but something he has not achieved so far.

He is relaxed and humorous, a little too serious maybe until you get to know him, but when a smile finally lights up his face, he is so likable. That may explain why he

Continued on the next page

Workers' school strategizes to organize the South

By Fred Goldstein
Raleigh, N.C.

Close to 60 people gathered at the Southern Workers School in Raleigh, N.C., Dec. 5 to exchange experiences in organizing and to fight for collective bargaining and social and economic justice. The one-day conference included workers from North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, Georgia and Tennessee.

The school, which was held at the Hargett Street YWCA, focused a great deal on the need to repeal legislation forbidding government agencies to enter into collective bargaining with unions, particularly the reactionary Jim Crow statute 95-98 in North Carolina.

The program, chaired by Shafeah M'Balia of Black Workers for Justice, was opened up by BWFJ's Ajamu Dillahunt. He stressed that in order to strengthen the labor movement as a social force, the unions must fight for the needs of all the workers, inside and outside the labor movement, organized and unorganized, employed and unemployed.

Angaza Laughinghouse Sr., president of United Electrical Workers Local 150, followed with an appeal for the unions to fight for political demands and for social justice as part of their organizing strategy. He stressed the struggle for undocumented and all immigrant workers and the fight against racism, sexism and war in proposing a vision of the labor movement as a social movement as opposed to narrow business unionism.

Donna DeWitt, chairperson of the South Carolina AFL-CIO and one of only five women who hold state AFL-CIO chairs, talked about labor law reform and stressed the democratic, constitutional rights of workers, which include the right to assemble, to picket, to strike and to organize. She traced labor law reform going back to the 1930s and ended with the message that workers have not relied on law reform to get their rights, but on rebellion. They have to "just do it."

There were many important discussions and workshops throughout the day, including a Women's Roundtable where women workers discussed the conditions with and without unions. The roundtable was chaired by Larsene Taylor, State Secretary and Department of Health and Human Services Chair of UE 150.

There was a well-attended Youth Caucus, co-chaired by Salia Warren and Angaza Laughinghouse Jr., both youth organizers for BWFJ. The caucus spoke about the catastrophic consequences for youth, especially Black and Latino/a youth, in the present economic crisis. They discussed combating alienation among youth in the community and getting them involved in organizing.

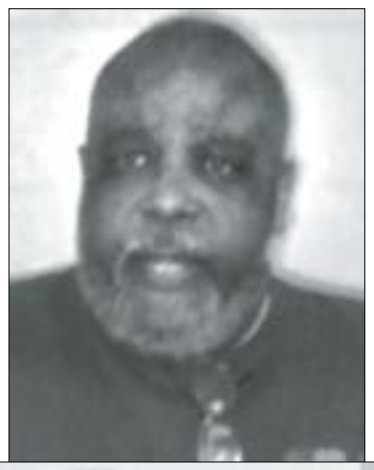
Saladin Muhammad of BWFJ, coordinator of the International Worker Justice Campaign and retired International Representative of UE, gave a rousing final talk. He held out the vision of fighting to transform the South with a broad rank-and-file movement that works to democratize society for the working class. Muhammad called for a Southern alliance for collective bargaining. He stressed that we must build not just a trade union movement but a social movement that fights for the community, for democratic rights, against racism and against all forms of oppression.

Muhammad closed by showing how the ruling class has always sought to solve its crises on the backs of the workers in the South, and Black workers especially. He showed that the South is not just a geographical unit but a social and economic unit and that organizing the South would show the world that the U.S. ruling-class monster could be defeated within its own borders.

He said it would be a great leap forward for the entire working class if the least organized and the most exploited workers—the Black, Latino/a and poor white workers of the South—could break the back of the right-to-work laws. This could be the spark that sets off a broad fightback.

The proceedings were closed by the Fruit of Labor singing ensemble, which included Nathanette Mayo, Erin Byrd and Laughinghouse Sr.

The school was sponsored by BWFJ, Labor Notes and the Communiversity. □



Clockwise, Saladin Muhammad, Shafeah M'Balia and Raleigh Fight Imperialism, Stand Together member Vidya Sankar.

WW PHOTOS: MONICA MOOREHEAD

has received marriage proposals-which he has declined.

The United States has by far the largest number of prisoners in the world. African-American males are one-tenth of the world's prison population. Targeted by COINTELPRO and most likely convicted with fabricated evidence, hundreds of political activists have been punished for their political activity with a lifetime of imprisonment. In the deepest dungeons of the United States they spend their lives in small prison cells, unnoticed by and anonymous to the young generation and not often enough remembered as comrades in the struggle by those still active in the progressive movement.

Muntaqim is one of those hundreds. He deserves to be remembered and honored. Free all U.S. political prisoners!

For more information on Muntaqim's case, visit www.freedomarchives.org and www.freethesf8.org.

Aastrup, a Danish political activist and writer for the newspaper Arbejderen (The Worker), follows closely the issues of political prisoners.

Women, people of color new majority

Study confirms changes in organized labor

By Sue Davis

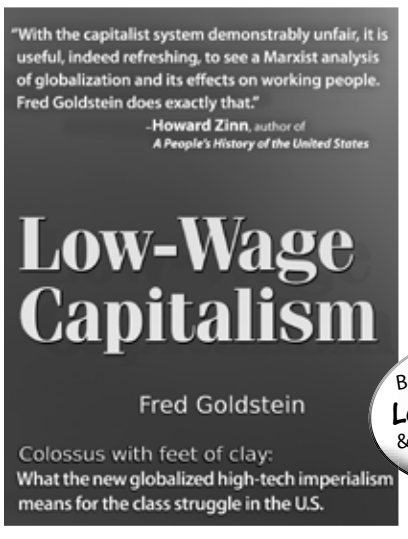
Sam Marcy, the founding chairperson of Workers World Party and a farseeing contributor to the Marxist-Leninist tradition, foretold in his 1986 book "High Tech Low Pay" that women and people of color would soon gain ascendancy in the U.S. working class. Now a scholarly study, "The Changing Face of Labor, 1983-2008," published by the Center for Economic and Policy Research, verifies just that in the organized labor movement.

Here's a brief overview of some of the current data on organized labor in the U.S. in 2008 and the changes reflected over the last quarter century:

- Over 45 percent of unionized workers are women, up from 35 percent in 1981. At current growth rates women will be the majority of unionized workers before 2020.
- Latino/as are 12.2 percent of the unionized workforce, up from 5.8 percent in 1983. Asian Pacific-Americans were 4.6 percent of union workers, up from 2.5 percent in 1989.
- About one in eight (12.6 percent) union workers is an immigrant, up from one in 12 (8.4 percent) in 1994 (the first year when consistent data were available).
- Black workers are about 13 percent of the unionized workforce, a percentage that has held fairly steady since 1983, despite a large decline in the percentage of whites in the same time period.
- Just under half (48.9 percent) of unionized workers are in the public sector, up from about a third (34.4 percent) in 1983. About 61 percent of unionized women are in the public sector, compared to about 38 percent of men.
- Of the remaining half of the unionized workforce, four out of every 10 workers are in the private sector outside of manufacturing, and one of every 10 is in manufacturing, down from almost 30 percent in 1983.
- The most heavily unionized age group is 55 to 64 years old (18.4 percent of this age group are in a union). The least unionized age group is 16 to 24 years old (5.7 percent).

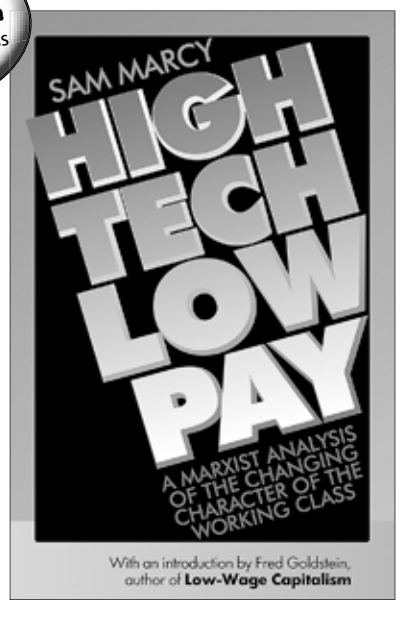
As the organized working class struggles in this recession to assert its needs and aspirations, which are on a collision course with the ruthless greed of the ruling class, it's important to know that women and people of color will be leading the charge.

Of course all workers—organized and unorganized, undocumented and unemployed—and all the oppressed need to unite to win the economic and social justice that should be their birthright. □



LOW-WAGE CAPITALISM
What the new globalized high-tech imperialism means for the class struggle in the U.S.
by Fred Goldstein
New book provides an easy-to-read analysis of the roots of the current global economic crisis, its implications for workers and oppressed peoples, and the strategy needed for future struggle.
The author is available for lectures & interviews.

Books available at Leftbooks.com & bookstores across the country.



HIGH TECH, LOW PAY
A Marxist analysis of the changing character of the working class
By Sam Marcy Re-issued for WW's 50th anniversary.
As on target today as when it was first published in 1986, this book explains how the high-tech revolution destroyed high-paying jobs while bringing more of the oppressed into workplaces, raising the potential for more solidarity and struggle.
New introduction by Fred Goldstein, author of **Low- Wage Capitalism**, explains the roots of the current economic crisis, with its disastrous unemployment, which has heightened the need for a working-class resurgence.

Rosa Parks Day commemorated

By Catherine Donaghy
Springfield, Mass.

An overflow crowd heard Larry Holmes, keynote speaker at Springfield Technical Community College's 5th annual Rosa Parks Day observance on Dec. 1. The predominantly African-American audience of more than 230 included high school students and local elected officials, among them State Rep. Ben Swan and Ward 4 City Councilor-elect E. Henry Twiggs, co-founder of the Springfield Rosa Parks Day Organizing Committee.

All three area television stations interviewed Holmes and provided coverage of the event. Holmes was also interviewed by a local Webzine that focuses on issues in Springfield's African-American community.

Dr. Arlene Rodriguez, the college's first Latino/a dean, moderated the day's proceedings, which were co-sponsored by the STCC Mobilization Against Poverty, Racism and War.

Springfield's African-American Freedom Choir opened the program with a moving rendition of "Eyes on the Prize." Dr. Ruth B. Loving, a member of the choir, met with Rosa Parks in Springfield during the late 1950s.

An aide to Springfield's mayor, Dominic Sarno, read a proclamation declaring Dec. 1 "Rosa Parks Human Rights Day" in the city.

Professor Nicholas Camerota, the event's principal organizer, reminded the crowd of the legendary civil rights leader's radical history. The printed program, written by Camerota, pointed out that Rosa Parks became a Black Nationalist, who gave one of the eulogies at the funeral of Robert F. Williams, an advocate of armed Black self-defense.

During his talk, titled "The Real Rosa Parks," Holmes explained the event's purpose was not just to educate people about Rosa Parks, but to inspire them to take action. He drew parallels between conditions of the African-American community in the 1950s and now, and stressed the need for Black/Brown unity in today's struggle against globalized capitalism and mass media that attempt to isolate and pit workers against each other.

Holmes' speech was greeted by a prolonged standing ovation from the crowd, which was largely comprised of youth. To close the event, the entire audience stood and, led by the Freedom Choir, sang several verses of "We Shall Overcome." □

White House protest demands jobs

Protesters converged on the White House on Dec. 3—the day President Barack Obama was holding his "jobs summit"—to demand a comprehensive jobs program, not more war. The jobs summit was held just two days after President Obama announced plans for the escalation of the war on Afghanistan. Unemployed people and their supporters came from New York City; Rhode Island; Philadelphia; Boston; and Rochester, N.Y. They demanded a jobs program similar in scope to the Works Progress Administration of the 1930s and 1940s, and described the Dec. 3 action as a stepping stone to larger actions on April 10—the 75th anniversary of the WPA. For more information, visit www.bailoutpeople.org.

—Report and photo by LeiLani Dowell

School segregation resisted in North Carolina

By Vidya Sankar and Dante Strobino
Raleigh, N.C.

Fighting to reverse 40 years of progressive change in the Wake County School Board, North Carolina Republican Party candidate John Tedesco was successfully elected to a District 2 School Board position in the Nov. 3 elections. Tedesco, a staunch segregationist and champion of "neighborhood schools," and three other school board members joined incumbent Ron Margiotta to secure a pro-segregationist majority on the nine-member board.

Anti-segregation supporters tried to link a return to neighborhood schools in Wake, whose county seat is Raleigh, with what has happened to Charlotte, N.C., schools since the district abandoned busing in 2002. With more children returning to "neighborhood schools," the suburban schools, with more white children, have become more affluent, while inner-city Charlotte schools, with more people of color, have become poorer. Many of the racist demagogues like to cloak their campaigns with arguments that busing is "anti-parent"—meaning that busing hinders parental involvement—to make the masses of white workers feel it is in their interest to side with them.

In recent years Wake schools have shifted from busing children primarily based on race to organizing schools based on income. County officials assign and bus students in order to ensure that no school has more than 40 percent of students receiving free or reduced lunches. According to the Raleigh News and Observer, Wake County Public School System students, on average, spend almost 15 minutes less on a bus each day than the state average. Eighty-six percent of Wake students currently attend a "neighborhood school" within five miles of their homes, and 99 percent within 10 miles. (Oct. 2)

Community stands united against racist segregation

The few policies implemented by the ruling class to help working-class and oppressed people, such as busing to help counteract Jim Crow apartheid, are scapegoated as the reason for budget shortfalls caused by the capitalist economic crisis. Thus, they are seen as targets for cuts during recessions. Oppressed groups are always disproportionately hurt by the failures of the capitalist system, and the push to re-segregate schools by the racist right wing is a move to increase that oppression.

Tedesco's racist chauvinism came out in full force the night of his election, while hanging out with Republican supporters like Garner, N.C., Mayor Ronnie Williams. Tedesco stated that school segregation was "generational"—a thing of the past that African-American youth would go along with—as if Jim Crow doesn't still exist in the South!

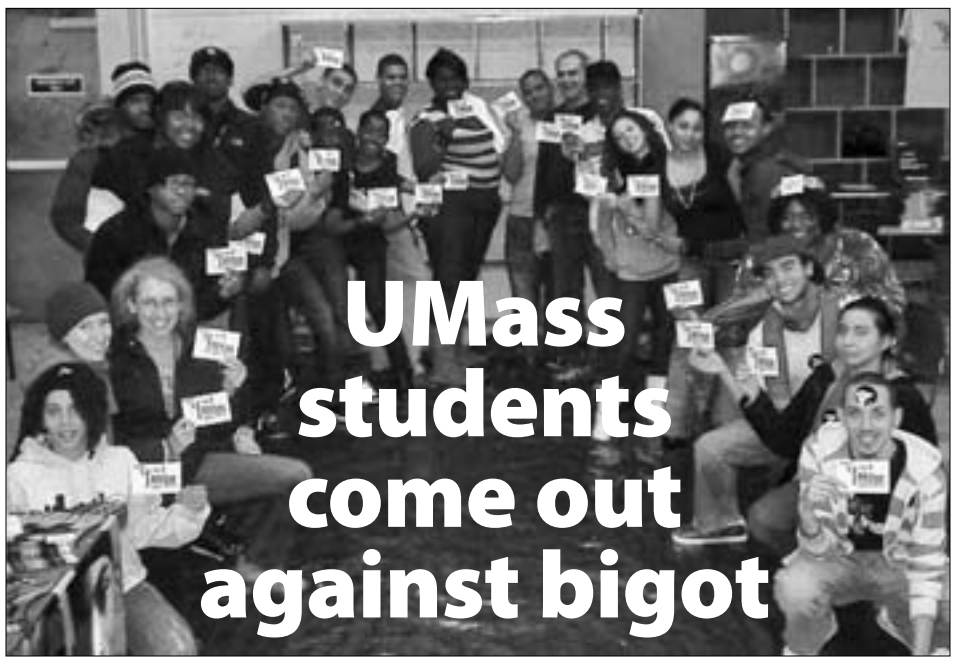
Tedesco completely underestimated the capacity of the community to respond. On Oct. 30 the NAACP organized a march and a mass meeting in downtown Raleigh that attracted several hundred parents, children and community members of all nationalities. The meeting, hosted at the Martin Street Baptist Church, urged the community to hold the school board accountable for any future plans. Later that weekend the NAACP organized a second mass meeting at Juniper Level Baptist Church near Garner.

"You and I here tonight know that when children are packed into the most underfunded, most segregated, most high poverty schools, it is nothing more than institutionalized child abuse," the Rev. William Barber, North Carolina NAACP president, told the crowd in Raleigh. "We won't let them take Wake County because it could lead to the whole state, then the whole South."

Barber continued: "The truth is the people use the ploy of neighborhood schools and busing as a wedge issue to divide us. ... Their motives are rooted in a past which all of America—including the old slave states that tried to leave America to maintain slavery—wants to leave behind."

The movement behind quality education and the fight against racism is growing to resist these efforts by Tedesco and the new school board. Combined with the fight for jobs and against budget cuts, the unity and determination of the community will undoubtedly prevail.

Sankar attended Wake schools for eight years, and Strobino attended Charlotte schools for 10 years.
Both are organizers in Raleigh FIST—Fight Imperialism, Stand Together.



New Era: Movement in Motion gathers on World AIDS Day.

WW PHOTO: LIZ GREEN

World AIDS Day protest

By Gerry Scoppettuolo
Boston

Over 100 University of Massachusetts students and community supporters came out here on Dec. 1 to protest the appearance near the UMass campus of the white supremacist, anti-gay, anti-Semitic Fred Phelps and members of his Westboro Church in Kansas.

Phelps, who is infamous for picketing the funerals of people who have died from AIDS, had the audacity to come to the campus on World AIDS Day. But the students were determined to turn out forcefully to condemn him and his bigoted followers.

Edwin Melenciano, 24, an HIV outreach worker, typified the community outrage at Phelps: "It's important to oppose him and not lay back and stay quiet. Not to oppose him would be to say he is right. We have to stand up to him to show others the way."

Terrell Amooson, president of the Student Government Association, was among the elected student leadership that helped organize the rally. "I feel we need to shed some light on the ignorance here and promote equal rights. Phelps is a hypocrite for using God's name to promote hate."

The rally was organized and supported by the UMass LGBT Equality Coalition, the International Socialist Organization, the Stonewall Warriors/IAC, New Era: Movement in Motion and the Boston Youth Organizing Project. □

Transgender protection laws passed in Ohio

By Martha Grevatt
Cleveland

On the evening of Nov. 30, scores of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer activists packed Cleveland City Council chambers in anticipation of a tremendous victory for the transgender community. That night the Council revised the city charter to prohibit discrimination based on gender identity and gender expression.

The resolution was first introduced last year by Joe Santiago, Cleveland's first openly gay councilperson. Santiago was also one of only two Latinos/as ever elected to the Council.

The vote—21-0 with no abstentions—came as a result of a year-long grassroots campaign. Volunteers from the group Ask Cleveland did door-to-door canvassing in all of the city's council wards, explaining the issue of discrimination against trans people and asking residents to sign postcards telling their councilpersons to support the charter revision.

The final push came this past Election Day, when hundreds of additional postcards were signed by voters at their local polling sites. Voters had previously been targeted at the September primary election for mayor and City Council. All together over 2,600 postcards were received by the City Council, over half of them from African-American residents.

Last year, when the Council passed a resolution establishing a domestic partner registry in Cleveland, all but two African-American councilpersons voted against it. Several changed their position after heavy lobbying by prominent Black ministers. For that reason, Ask Cleveland made a point of reaching out to the African-American community. "The reason we won 21-to-nothing was that we actually talked to the people, and the Council knew that," Doug Braun, an Ask Cleveland organizer, told Workers World.

Ask Cleveland did not fight this struggle single-handedly. A coalition, including the LGBT Center, Equality Ohio, Stonewall Democrats, TransFamily Cleveland and TransOhio, lobbied the City Council extensively. All of the groups active in the campaign had a presence at City Hall during the vote.

More victories south of Cleveland

Earlier the same day the Akron City Council voted to ban discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation as well as gender identity. While this was the first time that transgender-inclusive language was introduced, efforts to add "sexual orientation" to Akron's non-discrimination codes go back to 1998.

Nov. 30 was also the day that Summit County, which includes Akron, granted discrimination protection to transgender employees of the county and of companies with which the county does business.

Now all of Ohio's six largest cities—Cleveland, Akron, Toledo, Cincinnati, Columbus and Dayton—and five out of six of their respective counties, along with 11 smaller municipalities, offer legal redress for the vicious discrimination faced by transgender workers. The recent victories mean that one in five Ohio residents lives in a community that is, at least on paper, trans-friendly.

However, in their final form both the Akron and Cleveland charter revisions contained significant flaws. The Cleveland ordinance, which covers employment, housing and public accommodation, exempts restrooms and locker rooms from public accommodations and for employment only requires a "reasonable accommodation." Thus, in a restaurant, store, gym or any public place, transgender people could and will be forced to use facilities designated for the sex assigned them at birth, regardless of their gender identity—putting their safety at risk. Employers would be free to segregate transgender workers in "separate-but-equal" locker rooms and bathrooms.

Community activists only learned of the amendments the night before the vote. They were raised in the Finance Committee—although banning discrimination doesn't cost a penny—by the Council president, Martin Sweeney, who chairs that committee. "We asked our transgender volunteers what to do," Braun explained, "and they said it has shortcomings but we need to pass this."

The Akron ordinance, which prevents employment discrimination within city limits and by city contractors, has two problems. The words "gender identity" are excluded for contractors that provide services to minors. This perpetuates the stereotype that transgender adults are somehow inherently a danger to children and furthermore attacks transgender youth by depriving them of role models.

Both "sexual orientation" and "gender identity" discrimination are permissible by religious organizations that have city contracts. But why should a public body enter into contracts with "faith-based" entities to begin with, especially those for whom the bigoted condemnation of natural human expression as sinful is an article of faith?

Northeast Ohio activists are vowing to continue the fight until all of these insidious last-minute "compromises" are overturned and the full rights of the LGBTQ community are fully recognized. □

Women's fight for equal, quality health care

Excerpts from a talk given by Ellen Catalinotto at the WWP National Conference, Nov. 14. View this entire talk at www.workers.tv.

The way in which the most vulnerable people are treated is an important measure of a society. Looking at women and children in the United States we see that this "advanced" capitalist country fails on vital indicators.

Each year 28,000 infants die in this county, putting the U.S. in 30th place, behind all of western Europe, several Asian countries, Canada and Cuba in infant mortality. These poor outcomes reflect the entire population. Statistics show that infant mortality for African Americans is more than twice as high (13.6 deaths for every 1,000 live births) as for whites (5.8).

U.S. maternal mortality, the number of women who die for every 100,000 live births, is 41st in the world. Maternal mortality inequalities are even worse—Black women are 3.7 times more likely to die during pregnancy or birth than whites.

We don't hear much in the media these days about HIV in this country, but the epidemic continues its devastation, especially in communities of color and among women, who now make up a quarter of those infected. Over two-thirds of new infections in women result from unprotected sex with an infected man.

According to the Centers for Disease Control, among females age 25 to 34 HIV was the fourth leading cause of death in African Americans and seventh for Latinas. Among women 35 to 44 HIV was the third leading cause of death for Blacks and fourth for Latinas.

HIV/AIDS affects African-American and Latina women disproportionately.

We don't have time to discuss the many reactionary aspects of the so-called Affordable Health Care for America Act, passed in the House on Nov 7. As far as women's health goes, it excludes immigrants, criminalizes those too poor to buy insurance and threatens reproductive choice.

The Stupak amendment to the bill goes beyond existing bans on using federal money to pay for abortions. It forbids private insurers participating in the new health insurance exchange to offer abortion coverage to women, even if women pay for these policies with their own money.

And other health care measures for women of reproductive age are also in danger. The bill does not include basic well-woman care such as pelvic exams, testing for sexually transmitted diseases or contraception. So insurers could exclude or charge extra for such care.

This affects 62 million women ages 15 to 44, of whom 43 million are (hetero)sexually active and rely on contraception to avoid pregnancy. Each year about 6 million pregnancies occur—half of them unintentional. About 4.2 million women give birth, and 1.2 million have abortions.

Maternity care, which private individual policies now exclude, will be required under the new plan. Because so many women of childbearing age are in low-wage jobs, unemployed and without health benefits, 45 percent of the $86 billion spent on maternity care yearly is already paid for under Medicaid-type programs. Will working women who are slightly above the income limits for Medicaid coverage be able to afford this new insurance? Will they find themselves pregnant, uninsured and fined for being in that situation?

WW PHOTO: G. DUNKEL

Ellen Catalinotto

Of the 126,964 women living with HIV/AIDS, 64 percent were Black, 19 percent were white and 15 percent were Latina. The rate of AIDS diagnosis for Black women (45.5/100,000 women) was approximately 23 times the rate for white women (2.0/100,000) and four times the rate for Latinas (11.2/100,000).

Source: CDC: HIV/AIDS among Women, Aug. 2008

The free-market approach to medicine in this country swings wildly from flat denial of care to excessive, expensive—and often unproven—high-tech diagnostic tests and treatments.

It is for-profit chaos. Now we have the spectacle of Congress throwing single-payer and women's right to abortion overboard. Health care reform is being turned into a financial bonanza for the insurance and drug industries and a political bonanza for the anti-women right. This demands a fightback.

Women must be and will be in the forefront of the struggle needed for a truly socialist health system which serves peoples' needs instead of corporate profits. □

50 years of revolution

Cuba's legacy in fighting racism

By Larry Hales

On Dec. 1 a statement began to be circulated entitled "A Declaration of African-American Support for the Civil Rights Struggle in Cuba." The statement has 60 signatories—well-respected Black intellectuals, cultural performers and political activists, many of whom were leaders during the Civil Rights era and continue to be today.

The statement alleges not only racism in Cuban society but systemic racism. It insinuates that racism is a policy of the Cuban government, not merely a lasting vestige of the neo-colonial government before the 1959 socialist revolution.

To anyone who has ever been to Cuba or is in the movement to defend the Cuban Revolution, such a statement seems odd. It seems rather ironic coming from the U.S., despite the existence of the first Black president.

This statement signed by prominent figures is extremely dangerous for the Cuban Revolution and its admirers, defenders and those who look upon it as an example of what is not only necessary but possible when working and oppressed people confront their oppressor.

Such a statement comes at a time when the U.S. is trying to fix its image around the world. While the election of President Barack Obama is progressive—meaning that the consciousness of white workers was advanced enough to see beyond racism and even reject not only the racism of Hillary Clinton's campaign but also that of McCain/Palin's—the Obama administration has not meant much materially for the oppressed in the U.S.

The situation of the people of New Orleans has not changed, and many thousands have still not been able to return to their homes or been allowed to rebuild. They haven't received the training and materials needed, nor prevailing wages, in order to come back and rebuild what had historically been a Black city.

While the U.S. government sat criminally by and millions around the world watched as tens of thousands of Black people languished in rising waters and oppressive heat, facing roving white bands armed to the teeth and racist police, the Cuban government amassed hundreds of doctors, nurses and other professionals who were ready to descend on New Orleans to assist the people, but their offer was ignored.

Racism permeates U.S. society

Today, the situation for Black people, especially young people, has worsened. Oppressed people in the U.S. are left behind greatly in every category.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, while youth unemployment is at an all-time high, it is direr in the oppressed communities. Black youth unemployment is at 32 percent; it's at 22 percent for Latino/a youth and much higher in Indigenous communities. These numbers are inadequate, as they don't account for youth who are discouraged and who have probably never had a job.

Poverty continues to increase: 34 percent for Black youth and 28 percent for Latino/a youth, while for Indigenous youth statistics are difficult to find—though 60 percent of Native people outside of cities are impoverished.

The rates of Black and Latino/a youth who graduate on time with a high school diploma are 59 and 61 percent, respectively. Only 50,000 Black men graduate each year with a bachelor's degree. A much higher number of Black men between the ages of 20 and 29 are under correctional supervision or control. As of 2008, one in three or 846,000 Black males were incarcerated. (childrensdefense.org)

WW COMMENTARY

The reality of oppressed people is tied to the very foundation of U.S. society. The roots of the rise of U.S. capital are the most naked forms of exploitation—theft of land, genocide, pillage, plunder and racism. In order to maintain the status quo, racism, sexism, homophobia and other ills are not only tolerated but used by the ruling elite and continue to be written into the laws of society.

Millions of people—undocumented workers—are pushed into the U.S. by imperialism, whether by neo-liberal policies or the military in their homelands, and they fear being rounded up and deported. Their labor not only makes millions for the capitalists, but taxes collected from them put billions into government coffers. The government uses immigration agents to raid workplaces and homes and allows local police to be deputized so they can be used federally to round up people for having brown or black skin and speaking a different language. And then there is the current war being waged against Muslims and Arab people, evident in the seizing of mosques and religious institutions by the federal government.

WW PHOTO:: KRIS HAMEL

Medical students from around the world are educated in Cuba

Cuba demonstrates anti-racist solidarity

But Cuba is targeted for racism? This is nothing more than a ploy to further try and undermine the revolutionary government. Cuba has a long history of showing solidarity with liberation movements around the world. Though it is a resource-poor nation, it has sent tens of thousands of doctors and educators around the world. Cuba's assistance to the Angolans defeated the South African military and was crucial in breaking the back of apartheid.

Cuba has also shown support to Black people in the U.S. and has given political asylum to a number of Black militants, including Assata Shakur, who has a $1 million bounty on her head from the state of New Jersey.

The Cuban revolution has made great strides in reversing backwards ideas and building a society upon the principles of socialism, where people are in solidarity with one another instead of in competition. This is its greatest weapon and ultimately the greatest weapon any society can use to combat racism, sexism and homophobia.

Afro-Cuban artists have written a letter to the African-American people answering the outrageous claims in the Dec. 1 "declaration" regarding alleged racism in Cuba. The letter can be downloaded in its entirety by clicking on Cuban Solidarity at www.blackeducator.org. It reads in part:

"If the Cuba of these times was that racist nation they want to invent, its citizens would not have contributed massively to the liberation of the African people. More than 350,000 Cuban volunteers fought alongside their brothers of Africa against Colonialism. More than 2,000 fighters from the Island fell in the lands of that Continent.

"A personality of undisputed worldwide relevance, Nelson Mandela, has recognized the role of those volunteers in the definitive defeat of the infamous Apartheid regime.

"From Africa we brought back only the remains of our dead. Cuba has over there in that continent no property, no bank, no mines, no oil wells.

"If the Cuba of today were to feel such disrespect for Blacks, more than 35,000 African youth would not have been trained in our schools over the past 40 years, nor would 2,600 young people from some 30 African nations be studying right now in our universities.

"A people sick with racism would refuse to collaborate in the training of medical doctors and other human resources in health care at the Schools of Medical Sciences founded in Guinea Bissau, Equatorial Guinea, Gambia, and Eritrea. They would have turned their back on the Health assistance programs that have saved thousands of lives in Latin America and the Caribbean, where the African Diaspora is significant, and they would have not provided services to the more than 20,000 Haitians and English-speaking Afro-Caribbeans who have recovered their eyesight through surgical operations performed in our country, free of charge.

"It is very probable that the majority of those who signed the document aren't aware that when the City of New Orleans was devastated by Hurricane Katrina, dozens of Cuban medical doctors and paramedics volunteered to provide help to storm victims in a humanitarian gesture that received no response from the American authorities." □

Resistance grows to the U.S.-backed

By Abayomi Azikiwe
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

A bomb blast at the Shamo Hotel in Mogadishu on Dec. 3 has further destabilized the unpopular and fragile Transitional Federal Government of Somalia. It clings to power due to the deployment of 4,500 troops under the auspices of the African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM), a move engineered by the U.S. government through the U.N. Security Council.

The attack killed more than 20 people, including four ministers of the government headed by President Sheikh Sharif Ahmed.

The TFG has never had control over more than a section of the Somali capital, despite the allocation by both the Bush and Obama administrations of millions of dollars in weapons and equipment to the AMISOM forces. The government's position has become even more precarious with the expulsion of three top military officers of the TFG, bringing to light splits within the regime.

On Dec. 6 it was announced that new police and military commanders were being appointed to handle the worsening security situation. Garowe Online reported, "Gen. Ali Mahamed Hassan [Madobe] is the new police chief, replacing Gen. Abdi Hassan Awale [Qaybdid] while Gen. Mahamed Gelle Kahiye is taking over the military from the sacked Gen. Yussuf Hussein Osman [Dhumaal]."

This same report went on to state, "The embattled Somali government recently sacked Somali military and police commanders for failure to curb the rampant insurgency in the war-torn country." Although the TFG cabinet and Prime Minister Omar Abdirashid Sharmarke praised the newly appointed police and military commanders, opposition to the decision was reflected in demonstrations of hundreds of people in the capital in support of the former officials.

In the immediate aftermath of the bombing, the TFG placed blame on the main Islamic resistance organization, al-Shabaab. Al-Shabaab denied responsibility for the attack. The other organization fighting the TFG, Hizbul Islam, also refuted allegations that it was involved in the explosions, which took place during a graduation ceremony for Benadir University.

A spokesperson for al-Shabaab, Sheikh Ali Mohamud Rage, said: "We declare that al-Shabaab did not mastermind that explosion. ... It is not in the nature of al-Shabaab to target innocent people." (Reuters, Dec. 4)

The al-Shabaab spokesperson went on to stress: "We know that some so-called government official left the scene of the explosion just minutes before the attack. That is why it is clear that they were behind the killing."

Al-Shabaab controls large sections of the southern and central regions of the country.

Security situation deteriorates

These developments in Somalia illustrate that the situation is quite unstable in the capital, where the AMISOM forces and the TFG are based. As a result of the instability, the TFG prime minister has called for greater direct U.S. military involvement in Somalia.

Comparing the situation in Somalia to the U.S. policy towards Afghanistan, Prime Minister Omar Abdirashid Ali Sharmarke wrote in a letter to the Times of London: "We accept that ... the situation in Somalia will appear beyond repair but the reality is very different. What is so startling is that all the conclusions are as true about Somalia as they are about Afghanistan." (Reuters, Dec. 5)

The prime minister of the TFG continued by arguing: "Piracy and the growth of Islamic extremism are not the natural state of being. They are but symptoms of an underlying malaise—the absence of government and hope. The irony is that it would cost only a quarter of what is being spent right now on the warships trying to combat piracy to fund our plan and actually solve the problems rather than simply chasing them round the Indian Ocean."

This appeal is closely associated with the view by the U.S. that Somalia is a

After coup and ouster of legitimate president

Hondurans boycott fraudulent election

By LeiLani Dowell

The Honduran Congress, after maneuvering for weeks to avoid holding a vote to reinstate President Manuel Zelaya, voted on Dec. 3 not to restore him to office.

The vote came just four days after a fraudulent election was held in an attempt to legitimize a right-wing coup that kidnapped President Zelaya five months ago and put him on a plane to Costa Rica. Zelaya had incurred the anger of Honduras's elite class when he raised the minimum wage and rejected privatization, among other progressive moves.

The vote further exposes the sham Honduran elections that took place Nov. 29 in a country that has been heavily militarized and all opposition repressed since the first day of the coup, when a fierce resistance movement coalesced to demand Zelaya's return and the formation of a National Constitutional Assembly.

The voice of the people of Honduras was heard in its absence at the polls. While corporate media outlets repeat "official" government figures of 61.86 percent participation, the resistance movement says that 65 percent to 70 percent of the population boycotted the fraudulent elections, with many polling stations almost empty. This is confirmed by Lisa Sullivan, Latin America coordinator of School of the Americas Watch, who states, "Our delegation visited dozens of polling stations, finding them almost empty, in most places counting more electoral monitors and caretakers than voters." (soaw.org, Dec. 2)

Elvia Argentina Valle, a member of the Honduran Congress from the Department of Copan, calculated that even the figures released by the military-controlled Supreme Electoral Tribunal show an abstention rate of 62 percent among registered voters.

The elections were condemned by the governments of Brazil, Uruguay, Chile, Bolivia, Ecuador, Cuba and Nicaragua. The only countries that have said they will honor the phony elections are the U.S. and its allies in Colombia, Costa Rica and Panama.

According to New American Media reporter Marcelo Ballve, the so-called winner, rightist rancher Porfirio Lobo, has "said that, in all truth, the relationship that really matters for Honduras is the relationship with the United States." (Dec. 1) The Civic Council of Popular and Indigenous Organizations in Honduras reports that 800 U.S. troops participated in the militarization of the streets during the illegitimate elections. (Informations Ouvrières, Nov. 30)

Election-day repression

Sullivan described a colleague's experience on "election" day: "Tom Loudon was on the streets of San Pedro Sula when police tanks and water trucks and tear gas canisters attacked a peaceful march of the resistance movement. It took him a long time to find other members of his delegation who had scattered in the frenzy, but they were luckier than two observers from the Latin America Council of Churches who were detained or a Reuters photographer who was injured in the massive display of repression. Dozens of cell phones captured the police beating anyone they could catch with their billy clubs."

Sullivan also tells about Wilmer Rivero, a fisher in the small town of Puerto Grande. "He relayed how the police have been visiting his house and asking for him, ever since he trekked six days on foot to greet a returning President Manuel Zelaya. Each local mayor has been asked to put together a list of resistance leaders, and his name was one of 22 from his town. We suggested to Wilmer that he not sleep at home during the electoral days. He called the next day to thank us for our advice. The police had ransacked his home, and those of many of his neighbors, the night before elections, threatening his life. But, he wondered, what will he do now?"

Despite this repression, Lobo claimed that the election was the cleanest in the history of the country. (New American Media, Dec. 1)

Zelaya, on the other hand, stated: "I declare this process illegal and illegitimate as president of Honduras. It doesn't represent the sovereign rights of Hondurans and should be annulled and redone under a legal system." (pbs.org, Nov. 30)

The Resistance speaks

In a Nov. 30 communiqué, the National Front of Resistance Against the Coup declared to the Honduran people and the international community:

"1. The complete failure of the electoral farce set up by the oligarchy the 29th of November in dictatorial conditions confirms our proposal of declaring the elections and their results illegal and illegitimate, in addition to re-enforcing our position of not recognizing the regime to be installed the 27th of January.

"2. We call on the democratic and honest governments and social movements of the world to reject the electoral farce and not recognize the would-be government installed the 27th of January.

"3. Having carried out an electoral process that lacks all legitimacy and legality and that attempts to guarantee the power of a minority of the population, the installation of a National Constitutional Assembly represents the alternative to channel the demands of political participation of all of the Honduran people. We will continue to struggle for this.

"4. We reiterate that all of the acts that the current de facto regime and its successor carry out will not be recognized by the people. We especially emphasize our rejection of any amnesty for the violators of human rights.

"5. We take this moment to recognize the work of the Committee of Relatives of the Detained and Disappeared of Honduras, which today completes 27 years of vigilance for truth, justice and the construction of a society where human rights are guaranteed to all."

The communiqué was signed, "WE RESIST AND WE WILL WIN!" (hondurasresists.blogspot.com) □

Popular candidates kept off ballot in Haiti

By G. Dunkel

Ever since 1990 when the people of Haiti turned an election into a movement and voted en masse for Jean-Bertrand Aristide, the Haitian bourgeoisie and its imperialist backers have been leery of elections.

They have used military coups to reverse the results of elections they didn't like. They have also excluded popular parties from the ballot to keep them from winning. This is happening again right now.

Earlier this year, in partial senate elections, the candidates of Aristide's party, Fanmi Lavalas, were disallowed by the Provisional Electoral Council (CEP) on spurious grounds. FL called for a boycott, which was a resounding success. The National Council of Electoral Observation (CNO) estimated that only 2 to 3 percent of eligible voters participated.

Additional elections are now scheduled for February 2010, and the CEP has been even more outrageous. It has disqualified not only FL, Haiti's largest party, but 16 other parties that couldn't get their documents together in the seven days the CEP gave them. Haiti's Popular National Party (PPN), headed by Ben Dupuy, has refused to participate in these elections so as not to "back this trickery." (Haïtí-Progrès, Dec. 2-8)

Aristide is in exile in South Africa. In order to meet the strict deadline the CEP had imposed, he sent his appointment of Dr. Maryse Narcisse as FL's electoral representative via the package delivery service DHL. Gaillot Dorsinvil, chair of the CEP, rejected it, saying, "It didn't have a stamp or envelope." (Haïtí-Liberté, Dec. 2-8)

Aristide then gave an interview to a Haitian radio station for the first time in five years. He told Radio Solidarité, "It was me who wrote the mandate, signed the mandate and sent the mandate." He called for "honest, fair and free elections" and said he would personally come before the CEP if the Haitian government would give him travel documents.

Dorsinvil's reply was that the CEP's decision was final.

The CNO said this was "outside of all acceptable public justification." The Assembly of Organizations for Change (ROC), a coalition of neighborhood groups and cooperatives, called for massive demonstrations and threatened a boycott of the elections unless the CEP backed down.

The imperialists—the United States, Canada and France—have had to deal with the election of other candidates supported by the masses, like Hugo Chávez in Venezuela, Evo Morales in Bolivia, Rafael Correa in Ecuador and, recently, José Mujica, the co-founder of the Tupamaros, in Uruguay.

When money doesn't elect the candidate they want, the imperialists have another favorite tactic—coups. Aristide was first removed by the army in 1991. After years of struggle and thousands of deaths, he returned, abolished the army and was constitutionally succeeded as president by René Préval. At the end of Préval's term, in 2000, Aristide was again elected president by a bigger margin than his first victory. Fanmi Lavalas also swept the parliamentary elections.

Without an army, it took longer for reactionaries in Haiti, politically and financially backed by the U.S., to organize a coup. After a long series of commando raids and reactionary demonstrations, however, President Aristide was hustled onto a U.S. transport plane the night of Feb. 29, 2004, and flown to the Central African Republic.

Honduran soldiers followed the same script when they flew President Manuel Zelaya to Costa Rica this past June.

U.S. troops occupied Haiti for the third time in 2004, with a bit of help from France and Canada. (It was the first time French troops had been in Haiti since 1804, when an anti-colonial revolution kicked them out and set up the first Black republic.) The occupiers got a U.N. "stabilization" fig leaf called MINUSTAH in place three months later. The U.N. has occupied Haiti ever since.

After some interim regimes, René Préval won the presidential election in Haiti in 2006, running on the Lespwa ("Hope") slate. FL didn't field a candidate but strongly backed Lespwa.

The imperialists have additional reasons for controlling Haiti, besides overcoming its stubborn resistance. Haiti has significant deposits of gold, silver, bauxite and copper, whose development is hindered by political instability and crumbling infrastructure.

Even though Haiti is a country where hunger is rampant, the economy depends on remittances from abroad. Where protests are often met with deadly force from the U.N. occupying troops, the Haitian people have not abandoned their struggle and hope for democracy and freedom. □

Somali regime

haven for al-Qaida. Corporate media reports claim there are hundreds of "foreign fighters" inside al-Shabaab. The al-Shabaab organization has denied these accusations and says it is a movement led and supported by Somalis.

The U.S. has already dispatched a tremendous flotilla of warships, as alluded to by the prime minister. The Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean are shipping lanes for billions of dollars in goods and weapons. The problem of piracy derives from U.S. interference in the region, which has sparked increased instability and conflict.

Apparently there are other problems with the U.S.-backed AMISOM forces, which are composed of troops from Burundi and Uganda. The troops have been accused of committing atrocities against Somali civilians while carrying out the war against the Islamic resistance movements.

Despite the millions of dollars allocated to the AMISOM forces and the TFG, recent reports indicate that the soldiers have not been paid in months. The failure by African Union officials to account for millions of dollars for Somalia operations "has dried up payments for 4,500 peace-keeping troops after upset donors abruptly halted disbursements." (Uganda Monitor, Dec. 5)

The same report said Ambassador Nicholas Bwakira, the African Union special representative in Somalia, told Voice of America that the Ugandan and Burundian troops had not received any salaries since May and "this has a very bad impact on the morale of the troops and that of the government concerned."

Uganda reports that 37 of its troops have been killed in the fighting in Somalia. Burundi admits to losing 43 of its soldiers.

Meanwhile, Hizbul Islam organization leader Sheik Hassan Dahir Aweys urged the Somali people to escalate their struggle against the U.S.-backed AMISOM forces: "The people can reach peace and progress if they fight against the foreign troops in Somalia. The Somali people can return their prestige and honor after 20 years of conflict and political deadlock." (Shabelle.net, Dec. 5)

WORKERS WORLD editorial

Addicted to growth

Capitalism is addicted to growth. The system of commodity production—that is, hiring workers to produce things for sale at a profit—developed within the stagnant feudal societies of Europe and Japan and soon replaced them because of its great productivity. As Karl Marx pointed out, it was the cheap goods of capitalist mass production that battered down the walls of earlier societies all over the world.

But that great thinker and revolutionary also showed that, in society as well as in nature, things turn into their opposites. Add a little heat and ice, a solid, will turn into a liquid.

The tempestuous growth of capitalism, now several centuries old, is running into a wall it finds unconquerable. What was once capitalism's endearing asset—dynamic growth—has turned into a noose around its neck.

Part of it is due to capitalist overproduction, which has been a recurrent feature of the system since Marx's day. The mad race for profits leads to overbuilding of the means of production, which spew out much more than can be sold for a profit. A capitalist boom then turns into a bust.

But now there's also something else. The unplanned, frenetic growth of production that is characteristic of capitalism has produced an environmental crisis of enormous proportions. No one knows for sure what will happen next, but the scientists reporting to the climate talks in Copenhagen agree that the planet is warming rapidly and little time remains to reverse this ominous trend.

In capitalist countries like the U.S., all the discussions on climate change taking place at high levels have to do with how to curb carbon dioxide emissions within the confines of a system that puts the profits of banks and corporations above everything else. In other words, how can they go on producing more goods and services—at a profit—while at the same time making money off reining in greenhouse gases.

They are interested only in programs that guarantee the growth of their capital assets. That is what is behind all the debate over "cap and trade" versus "tax carbon goods."

The dilemma over what to do about climate change exists because of capitalism's need for a specific kind of growth—growth that insures the profitability of the corporations and banks. This has nothing in common with what the workers need: jobs at a decent wage, homes, health care, education, recreation and culture.

A socialist, planned economy could provide jobs building energy-efficient housing for the people, mass transit, a universal health care system, schools, libraries and cultural centers for a fraction of what this capitalist government spends on subsidies to the banks and corporations, imperialist wars, and jails to keep the youth from rebelling.

And it could do so while cleaning up the environment and reversing the toxic effects of rampant capitalist expansion. □

Pentagon sets course for wider war in Asia

Continued from page 1

Italy promised an additional 1,000; and France and Germany say they'll wait until a Jan. 28 meeting in London on Afghanistan before committing more. Canada and the Netherlands have been planning to withdraw the substantial contingents they have in Afghanistan.

Georgia—the former Soviet Republic that is currently a weak U.S. client state with an unpopular regime in power—has promised 900 of those 7,000 additional troops. How many of the 7,000 troops are coming from those former socialist countries, whose regimes are dependent on Washington and afraid of their own populations?

In almost every European NATO country as well as in the U.S., the already strong opposition to the Afghan adventure will expand as casualties increase in Central Asia. The Afghan occupation is now much more a U.S. occupation than it was under Bush, rather than a coalition effort.

Civil war in Pakistan?

The situation is even more dramatic regarding Pakistan. The Dec. 8 New York Times reports, "The Obama administration is turning up the pressure on Pakistan to fight the Taliban inside its borders, warning that if it does not act more aggressively the United States will use considerably more force on the Pakistani side of the border to shut down Taliban attacks on [U.S.] forces in Afghanistan."

That's easy for Washington to order, harder for Islamabad to obey. Washington is confronting the fragile Pakistani civilian government with a dilemma. Either it opens up a civil war against a section of its population or the U.S. will carry out drone bombing attacks, killing many civilians in what are called the Tribal Areas and in Baluchistan.

The major Pakistani offensive just carried out in the border provinces has already led to daily bombings in major Pakistani cities, some directed at police and military installations, by the anti-U.S. and anti-government forces. Others hit the general population, and it is hard to determine who is responsible.

The U.S. demands on Pakistan are complicated by the Pakistani Army's earlier support for the Taliban, helping bring them to power in Afghanistan in 1996 with the goal of establishing a stable regime. Some in Pakistan's army and secret police would prefer a Taliban regime in Afghanistan to many other scenarios. Thus U.S. escalation in Afghanistan—and the pressure on Pakistan—could lead to civil war in a nuclear-armed country of 170 million people.

Taliban make an offer

U.S. propaganda on Afghanistan—including Obama's Dec. 1 speech—lumps together the Taliban, al-Qaida, the Pakistani insurgent forces and all Afghan resisters. The truth is more complicated.

The Afghan resistance is made up of the Taliban, of local fighting groups with tribal loyalties and of secular Afghans whose politics date from the revolutionary government of 1978-1991. Apparently al-Qaida also participates, though its numbers are under 100 according to Washington's own estimates.

Al-Qaida has no Afghan members and consists mainly of Saudis and Egyptians. It has taken responsibility for the 9/11 attacks on the U.S. It and its leader Osama bin Laden—who was demonized as the main enemy of the U.S. after 9/11 but is hardly heard of now—were originally supported by the U.S. In those days al-Qaida supplied volunteer fighters against the Soviet troops that had been aiding the progressive Afghan government in the 1980s. Al-Qaida turned against the U.S. after U.S. troops occupied bases in Saudi Arabia.

The Taliban, which developed from a youthful group of religious fundamentalists, ran the Afghan government beginning in 1996 with a reactionary program that was very oppressive of women—similar to most of the groups backing today's puppet Afghan regime. The Taliban were ousted by the U.S. invasion in October 2001. Although at that time extremely unsophisticated, over eight years of occupation the Taliban have developed into the leading group in the Afghan resistance, which controls 11 of Afghanistan's 34 provinces.

The Taliban's first reaction to Obama's speech was to say, "The increased number of U.S. soldiers will not have any impact (on war), but it will instead provide the mujahideen with a greater chance to increase their attacks on them and on the other hand it will shake the already fragile U.S. economy." (South Asia News, Dec. 2)

The Taliban also promised not to "meddle in the West" if the U.S. and NATO got out of Afghanistan. (Wall Street Journal, Dec. 5)

By all appearances, it is not the Taliban whose policies bring chaos and slaughter to South and Central Asia, but U.S. imperialism. □

What Afghans think

By Deirdre Griswold

It's not often that a commercial publication in the United States allows an Afghan to speak freely about the benefits of life under the progressive government overthrown by Washington two decades ago. However, the Queens Chronicle broke the silence when it published "View from Afghanistan—A Queens man's view of living in wartorn country" on Oct. 29.

While the Queens Chronicle may be overshadowed by larger New York newspapers, it serves a borough of the city with 2.3 million people, nearly half of whom are immigrants.

Here's an excerpt from what Rameen Moshref Javid wrote about Kabul, where he now lives:

"Growing up in Afghanistan as a child and then in the United States as an adult, we were always [taught] to hate the Communists—a feeling that came naturally. Much to my shock and horror, when I returned to Kabul after 18 years abroad in 2002, I saw many pictures of Dr. Mohammed Najibullah, the former Afghan Communist president who was hanged from a traffic pole in Kabul by the Taliban in September 1996 when they took over the city.

"While Afghanistan never had much wealth in its entire history, Afghans still pine for the Communist era. When in disbelief I ask why, they all agree there was a discipline back then; there was national identity and nationalism; there was a respect for the individual and for the law; and no one was above the law, not even the president, who only owned a five-room apartment in the Soviet-built district.

"People admired Najibullah's leadership, his government, the qualified and civilized public servants, the social justice and equality and the civic culture that everyone enjoyed almost equally."

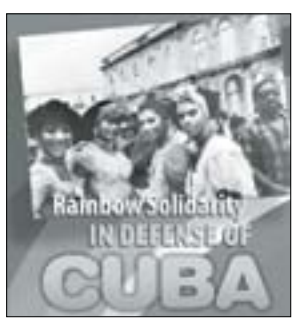
The CIA spent billions on a war to destroy that government. Now Washington is fighting a much costlier war there giving different excuses, but it still can't "pacify" the Afghan people. □

Rainbow Solidarity

In Defense of CUBA

By Leslie Feinberg, author of ***Stone Butch Blues***

This ground-breaking book documents revolutionary Cuba's inspiring trajectory of progress towards liberation of sexualities, genders and sexes.



MARXISM, REPARATIONS and the Black Freedom Struggle

An anthology of writings from *Workers World* newspaper. Edited by Monica Moorehead. Includes:

Racism, National Oppression and Self-Determination Larry Holmes

Black Labor from Chattel Slavery to Wage Slavery Sam Marcy

Harriet Tubman, Woman Warrior Mumia Abu-Jamal

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Black & Brown Unity: A Pillar of Struggle for Human Rights and Global Justice! Saladin Muhammad

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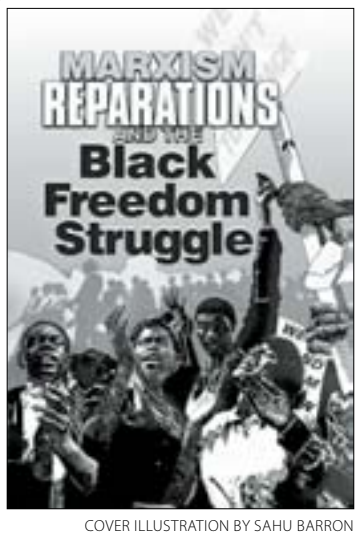

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In U.S. cities from coast to coast

Protesters slam escalation of war in Afghanistan

By Kris Hamel

Anti-war activists across the United States took to the streets in response to President Barack Obama's Dec. 1 announcement that an additional 30,000 U.S. troops will be sent to Afghanistan in a major escalation of the war on that central Asian country.

Even as Obama was speaking to Army cadets and officers at West Point, demonstrators from many anti-war groups were picketing at nearby Highland Falls, N.Y. Another protest took place in Los Angeles called by the International Action Center.

By the next day emergency actions were held in more than 100 U.S. cities from coast to coast.

Hundreds of activists gathered in Times Square in **New York**, where one speaker called Dec. 2 "the first day of mobilization of resistance to the imperialist war against Afghanistan."

Called by the International Action Center and the Troops Out Now Coalition, the action received the endorsement of two dozen local and national anti-war, military veteran and community organizations representing different parts of New York's varied immigrant population. Representatives of Pakistani, Iranian, Philippine, Korean, Honduran, Haitian and Palestinian organizations spoke.

Along with expressing sharp opposition to the U.S.-NATO occupation of Afghanistan and the new escalation, speakers raised opposition to U.S. military expansion in Latin America, U.S. support for the coup regime in Honduras, its support for Israel against the Palestinians, and U.S. hostility to Cuba, Iran and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Speakers also drew attention to the economic crisis and the need to take the funds destined for the Pentagon's war machine and use them for a real jobs program.

Most speakers at the Times Square protest also expressed disbelief about the president's contention that U.S. troops would begin leaving Afghanistan by 2011.

Several hundred peace and anti-war activists demonstrated at the federal building in downtown **Detroit**. The protest was called by the Detroit Area Peace with Justice Network and supported by the Michigan Emergency Committee Against War and Injustice.

Participating groups included the Michigan Coalition for Human Rights, Green Party, Detroit MLK Committee, Peace Action, Solidarity, Workers World Party and the social-justice-based Central United Methodist Church. The crowd was multigenerational, with veteran activists as well as students chanting loudly for an end to the war in Afghanistan.

During a brief rally, a MECAWI representative stressed that when people voted for Obama last year they were not casting their ballots to expand the existing wars: "People who voted for Obama wanted a real jobs program, health care, and new foreign and domestic policy for the U.S. Instead it is still the Pentagon and Wall Street that are setting policy for the government."

A DAPJN spokesperson emphasized that "people should pressure Congress to cut off funding for the escalation of the war." Rev. Ed Rowe of Central United Methodist Church challenged the religious community to come out solidly against the wars being waged by the Pentagon. All the organizations called for ongoing protests to end the present war drive in Central Asia.

The demonstration was covered by the local television affiliates of Fox and NBC and the Detroit News and Free Press daily newspapers.

A militant rally and march of several hundred to 1,000 anti-war activists took place in downtown **San Francisco** during evening rush hour. The protest was organized by the National Assembly to End the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars and Occupations and the Answer Coalition. Many other groups participated, including the International Action Center, Workers World Party, Code Pink, World Can't Wait and Raging Grannies.

WW PHOTO: JOHN CATALINOTTO

WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

WW PHOTO: ELLIE DORRITIE

More than 40 people gathered in front of the federal building in downtown **Tucson, Ariz.**, for a protest the evening of Dec. 3. Signs demanding "Money for Jobs, Not for War!" and "Stop the War" were met with raised fists and honks of approval from rush-hour traffic. The hour-long rally was called on short notice by local activists. It was noted that the people of Tucson, who have seen their city fill up with Border Patrol and Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents as "border security" moves northward, need jobs and health care, not more war and militarization.

Around 100 protesters gathered in **Philadelphia** across from City Hall to speak out against the Obama administration's escalation of war in Afghanistan. Despite a steady drizzle, demonstrators got their message out to downtown workers, shoppers and a group who had gathered for the city's annual display of holiday lights across the street.

Several protesters carried signs reading "Jobs Not War" and "Money for Health Care, Not for Warfare." Participating groups included Brandywine Peace Community, Philadelphia Anti-War Coalition, International Action Center, Bail Out the People Movement, Kensington Welfare Rights Union, Answer Coalition, Granny Peace Brigade and Students for a Democratic Society. A number of students came from area schools.

Protesters in **Buffalo, N.Y.,** rallied and took a long caravan of decorated cars through city streets to a large shopping mall. Holiday shoppers received leaflets protesting President Obama's announcement. The leaflet and car signs both emphasized the relationship between the huge military budget and the lack of money for jobs and health care.

People stopped and read the signs and signaled their support to the protesters. Buffalo is the third poorest city in the country.

The event was co-sponsored by the Buffalo Forum, Citizen Action of Western New York, Code Pink, Episcopal Peace Fellowship, Green Party of Erie County, Interfaith Peace Network, International Action Center, Pax Christi New York, Peace Jam Buffalo, University of Buffalo Progressive Alliance, Western New York Peace Center and Women in Black.

In **Chicago** several demonstrations took place, including a protest at the Federal Plaza called by Chicago Coalition Against War and Racism that drew several hundred activists on Dec. 5. The action was endorsed by about 75 groups. Organizers with the Bail Out the People Movement passed out leaflets entitled "Money for Jobs, Not for War," urging people to participate in an April 10 action in Washington, D.C., for a massive federal jobs program. They reported widespread interest by protest participants. Several hundred Workers World newspapers were also distributed during the march, which went down State Street in a busy shopping area.

In **San Diego** a group of around 200 gathered on the corner of Fairmont and University, near the office of Congressperson Susan Davis. The protest was called by the San Diego Peace and Justice Coalition. Other groups present included Activist San Diego, Veterans for Peace and the International Action Center.

One of the popular chants was "Obama, Obama, Yes we can, U.S. out of Afghanistan!" Protesters hung banners and signs on a gated fence at a construction site across the street from Davis' office. Many protesters carried candles for a vigil as the evening darkened and passersby honked their horns in support.

Anti-war protests also occurred in **Boston, Los Angeles, Minneapolis, Denver, Portland, Ore.,** and other cities and towns throughout the U.S.

Abayomi Azikiwe, John Catalinotto, Bev Hiestand, Jill Hill, Joan Marquardt, Zola Rices Muhammad, Betsey Piette and Paul Teitelbaum contributed to this article.

Top TEN reasons the U.S. ruling class wants to continue the war on Afghanistan

By Paul Wilcox

1. **If we can't make war on Afghanistan, how are we going to make war on Pakistan?**
2. **Even if the Taliban weren't involved in 9/11, it's OK to pretend it was. After all, Iraq wasn't involved in 9/11 either.**
3. **A cruel, murderous, expensive and losing war is certainly better than no war at all.**
4. **Aside from the bank bailout, war is the quickest way to take money from the working class and give it to us.**
5. **Compared to the U.S. Congress, the Karzai government in Afghanistan isn't all that corrupt.**
6. **Think of all that drug money in Afghanistan that might otherwise not be laundered by U.S. banks.**
7. **Even if we don't win, the war will ensure that even more money won't be wasted on jobs and health care.**
8. **It's a "two-fer": The war in Afghanistan will help us win the war on workers here in the U.S.**
9. **Perhaps the Afghan resistance will decide that being occupied and brutalized by the Pentagon war makers is a good thing after all.**
10. **Even if it doesn't, that's OK. We're not the ones fighting the war. That's what we make the working class do. We're just profiting from it. Isn't that the point?**

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MUNDO OBRERO

Proletarios y oprimidos de todos los países uníos!

La crisis y la perspectiva de resistencia: un esquema

Por Fred Goldstein, autor de **Low-Wage Capitalism** *(Capitalismo de salarios bajos), un análisis de los efectos de la globalización en la clase obrera y redactor asistente del Periódico Workers World/Mundo Obrero*

SEÑALES DE MOVIMIENTO ENTRE LOS/AS TRABAJADORES/AS, ESTUDIANTES Y ACTIVISTAS. Mientras la clase trabajadora y el movimiento sindical en general están retraídos después de décadas de ataques, seguidas por la crisis económica, hay crecientes focos de resistencia, tanto dentro como fuera del movimiento sindical.

El punto más bajo del movimiento sindical durante la crisis actual fue en el curso de los procesos de quiebra de la General Motors y la Chrysler. La dirigencia del sindicato industrial más poderoso en los Estados Unidos, la United Auto Workers, acordó humillantes y onerosas concesiones sin una lucha mientras las empresas planeaban cerrar más de 20 plantas y despedir a miles de trabajadores/as.

Pero en ese mismo momento, en diciembre de 2008, los/as trabajadores/as de la Republic Windows and Doors, Local 1110 del Sindicato United Electrical Workers en Chicago, cambiaron la atmósfera al ocupar su planta. La ocuparon durante seis días y obligaron al banco Bank of America a acceder a todas sus demandas de indemnización por despido, vacaciones pagadas y prestaciones. Este grupo de 250 trabajadores/as en gran medida negros/as y latinos/as, en su mayoría inmigrantes, animaron al movimiento sindical y se convirtió en un foco de solidaridad de clase en todo el país.

Mientras los/as trabajadores/as de la UE se mantenían ocupando su planta, 5.000 trabajadores/as de la Smithfield, obligaron a la planta de procesamiento de cerdos más grande del mundo, reconocer al sindicato United Food and Commercial Workers en el estado antisindical de Carolina del Norte, después de más de 15 años de lucha. La victoria, una de las más grandes en el sur en los últimos años, se logró por la alianza de negro/as, latinos/as, nativos/as americanos/as y asiáticos/as en una lucha que incluyó a un gran número de trabajadores/as inmigrantes.

En el período transcurrido desde entonces ha habido numerosas huelgas y luchas. Una reciente huelga de nueve semanas por el sindicato de los Teamsters en la SK Tools en Chicago, terminó con una victoria. Una huelga de los/as trabajadores/as de tránsito de Filadelfia ganó una victoria. Los/as trabajadores/as de Stella D'Oro en el Bronx ganaron una valiente huelga de un año de duración en contra de las concesiones, pero luego la compañía fue vendida y cerró la planta.

Ha habido muchas luchas, pero son realizadas en aislamiento. No ha habido ningún intento por los dirigentes sindicales de dar apoyo importante a ninguna lucha en particular o de generar una lucha coordinada.

Existen redes de apoyo a trabajadores/as por parte de estudiantes creciendo por todo el país. El movimiento en contra de los talleres de explotación laboral recientemente tuvo una victoria contra la Russell Athletic, obligando a la empresa recontratar a los/as trabajadores/as despedidos/as en Honduras y reconocer su sindicato.

Los recortes en los colegios públicos y privados afectan a los/as estudiantes y a los/as trabajadores/as y llevan a alianzas de estudiantes y trabajadores/as para defenderse y luchar. Importantes batallas contra los recortes están teniendo lugar en California—Los Angeles, Berkeley y otros lugares.

El movimiento para una verdadera reforma de salud se está extendiendo y el movimiento sindical se ha involucrado, pero sólo simbólicamente y haciendo cabildeo. Una movilización masiva para la reforma de salud se necesita urgentemente.

Colectivos y grupos radicales independientes entre los estudiantes dentro y fuera de los recintos universitarios están proliferando por todo el país y tomando una gran variedad de temas—la guerra, el medio ambiente, la pobreza, recortes en los servicios sociales y así sucesivamente.

Un creciente movimiento contra la ola de ejecuciones hipotecarias y desalojos se está desarrollando en Detroit, Minneapolis, Chicago y otras ciudades.

Una marcha liderada por el movimiento sindical contra la Asociación Americana de banqueros en Chicago irrumpió en la Convención. Existen muchos movimientos locales, pero hasta ahora están fragmentados. Sin embargo, se están sentando las bases para un movimiento nacional.

Estos acontecimientos y muchos más que están surgiendo bajo la superficie representan señales tempranas de la resistencia. Es seguro que crecerán como respuesta a la crisis económica, la guerra y la ocupación en Iraq, Afganistán y Pakistán, los ataques políticos a las personas y otras medidas reaccionarias.

LA LUCHA POR PUESTOS DE TRABAJO. La cuestión primordial en la actualidad y lo seguirá siendo, es la lucha por puestos de trabajo. El Movimiento pro Rescate del Pueblo celebró una marcha por trabajos en Pittsburgh en el momento en que el G-20 se reunía en septiembre para llevar la política de la demanda de puestos de trabajo a los líderes de los países imperialistas ricos. Poco después, muchos sindicatos locales participaron y lideraron una marcha para exigir puestos de trabajo en Boston.

La marcha por trabajos de Pittsburgh tuvo éxito, ya que obtuvo el apoyo y la participación de la comunidad negra, así como la aprobación de los sindicatos United Steel Workers y del United Electrical Workers. Hizo un avance concreto en la construcción de la clase de alianza laboral/comunidad que es clave para el éxito futuro en la lucha contra la crisis.

SEGUNDA PARTE

La administración de Obama, bajo presión para hacer algo acerca de la crisis sobre los puestos de trabajo, no ha hecho sino señalar el paquete de estímulo, que no ha hecho nada para frenar la marea de 8 millones de puestos de trabajo perdidos desde diciembre de 2007. Ahora la administración está llamando a una cumbre sobre puestos de trabajo.

Por primera vez, a casi dos años de la crisis, el liderazgo del AFL-CIO finalmente ha puesto un programa nacional de puestos de trabajo en la agenda. Se trata de un programa legislativo destinado a desviar el dinero hacia la extensión de la asistencia para los/as trabajadores/as, seguro de desempleo, la creación de puestos de trabajo mediante la construcción de infraestructura, la reconstrucción de las comunidades destruidas, ayuda a pequeñas empresas, y así sucesivamente.

Es un paso hacia adelante que el liderazgo sindical haya intentado resolver la crisis a nivel nacional. El programa aboga por los/as desempleados/as. El desempleo es un gran peligro para el movimiento sindical. Fue presentado por el líder de la AFL-CIO Richard Trumka y apoyado por el Presidente del NAACP Benjamin Jealous; la Presidenta del Consejo Nacional de la Raza Janet Murgia; el Presidente de la Conferencia de Liderazgo sobre Derechos Civiles Wade Henderson; y por Deepak Bhargava, director ejecutivo del Centro para el Cambio de la Comunidad. El Presidente del Instituto de Política Económica Larry Mishel moderó la conversación que Jealous catalogó como el comienzo de un movimiento nacional de derechos humanos para las oportunidades económicas.

El programa debería dar un impulso al movimiento por puestos de trabajo. Pero queda corto en muchas formas, incluyendo especialmente el fracaso de promover la absoluta necesidad de movilizar a los millones por dentro y fuera del movimiento sindical, empleados/as y desempleados/as, y ponerles en las calles y en Washington, D.C. y en otras ciudades para confrontar al establecimiento y exigir empleos.

El movimiento desde abajo debe afrontar este reto y promover una marcha por empleos. Y debe afrontar este reto desde un punto de vista internacionalista. El Movimiento pro Rescate del Pueblo ha hecho un llamado para una marcha por puestos de trabajo en Washington, D.C., el 10 de abril, en el 75º aniversario de la Administración de Progreso de Empleos (WPA) de Franklin Roosevelt. Un grupo de sindicalistas en la costa oeste ha llamado a la creación del Día de Solidaridad III en Washington, D.C., en la primavera. El terreno se ha sentado para la coalescencia de fuerzas para iniciar una lucha a gran escala por empleos e ingresos.

SOLIDARIDAD INTERNACIONAL Y UNIDAD ES LA CLAVE PARA LA VICTORIA. Las empresas transnacionales en los Estados Unidos han usado su tecnología para dividir sus procesos de producción y repartirlos en todo el mundo donde pueden encontrar los salarios más bajos y la tasa más elevada de explotación.

Han utilizado este proceso para enfrentar a los/as trabajadores/as de todo el mundo entre sí y crear una competencia por los salarios mundialmente en una carrera para reducir los salarios en general. En la medida en que se agrava la crisis económica, tratarán de poner a los/as trabajadores/as en los Estados Unidos en contra de sí mismos/as - en particular apuntando a los/as trabajadores/as indocumentados/as. Tratarán de dividir a la clase obrera de aquí de los/as trabajadores/as en el exterior usando a los/as trabajadores/as en los países de bajos salarios, anteriormente colonias, y quienes están súper explotados/as por los jefes, como chivos expiatorios.

Esta es la misma táctica de dividir y conquistar que utilizan cuando acusan a los/as trabajadores/as indocumentados/as y a los/as inmigrantes en general; o cuando promueven el racismo para dividir a los/as trabajadores/as blancos/as de los/as trabajadores/as oprimidos/as.

La única manera de superar la competencia de salarios y el racismo que divide y el chauvinismo, es mediante la creación de conciencia de clase y solidaridad de clase aquí y en el exterior. No debe haber fronteras en la lucha obrera. Bajo el nuevo régimen del capitalismo de bajos salarios, los/as trabajadores/as negros/as, latinos/as, asiáticos/as, indígenas, medio orientales, y de las Islas del Pacífico, mujeres y hombres, heterosexuales y gays, lesbianas, bi y trans, documentados/as e indocumentados/as, van a desempeñar un papel de vanguardia en la lucha de clases. Los/as trabajadores/as blancos/as y todos/as los/as trabajadores/as deben luchar contra los esquemas capitalistas que les dividen entre sí.

¡El golpe a uno/a es un golpe a todos/as! □

Libertad para los cinco cubanos

Libertad para los cincos compatriotas cubanos que defendieron a su país del terrorismo y que ahora están presos en EE.UU. por evitar muertes en la isla.

Gerardo Hernández Nordelo, Ramón Labañino Salazar, Rene González Sehwerert Antonio Guerrero Rodríguez y Fernando González Llort.